Shortfall in production due to drought

1690. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether half of India is in drought grip which has resulted in fall of output of rice, sugar, pulses and edible oils; and

(b) if so, to what extent Government is considering to improve position of rice, wheat, sugar etc., and the concrete steps and measures Government has taken to improve its productivity and meet shortage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per Ist advance estimates for kharif 2009, the production of rice, sugarcane, pulses and oilseeds are estimated at 69.45,4.42,249.48 and 15.23 million tonnes respectively against 84.58, 4.78, 273.93 and 17.88 million tonnes respectively during 2008-09 (4th advance estimates). In this regard Government has taken several steps to improve position of rice, wheat, sugar etc. Which are as under.

(1) Minimum support price of rice has been increased from Rs.850/- and Rs.880/- for Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2008-09 to Rs.950/- and Rs.980/- (KMS 2009-10) per quintal for common and Grade 'A' of Paddy, respectively with a Rs.50/- per quintal as bonus to enhance the availability of rice. Export of non-basmati rice has been banned and rice on private account at zero duty is allowed. State Governments have been requested to maximize the procurement of rice by opening sufficient procurement centers and other necessary arrangement for procurement of paddy and its milling.

(2) The custom duties on crude and refined edible oils have been reduced to nil and 7.5% respectively since 1st April, 2008.

(3) It has been decided that this duty structure would be continued till 30.09.2010. The Government has banned export of all major edible oils from the country since 17.03.2008 up to 30.09.2010. The Government had launched a scheme on 28.07.2008 to distribute up to 10 lakh tonnes of edible oils to States/UTs at a subsidy @ Rs.15/- kg. which was enhanced to Rs.25/- kg from January, 2009 to March, 2009.

(4) The Central Government has now fixed the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane payable by sugar mills for 2009-10 sugar season at Rs.129.84 per quintal linked to a basic recovery rate of 9.5% subject to a premium of Rs.1.37 per quintal for every 0.1 percentage point increase in recovery above that level. Hitherto, the Central Government was fixing the Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) of sugarcane. This FRP is substantially higher than SMP of 2008-09 sugar season which was Rs.81.18 per quintal, with an additional premium of Rs.0.90 for every 0.1% point increase in recovery above 9%.

(5) Concessional loans at an interest rate of 4% per annum are given to sugar factories from Sugar Development Fund (SDF) for modernization of plant and machinery, expansion of crushing capacity, utilization of by-products *viz.* baggasse for co-generation of power and molasses for production of ethanol, upgradation of technology and sugarcane development including better irrigation facilities, improved seed variety, ratoon management etc.

(6) A short term scheme has been announced for cane development in the current financial year under which loans of Rs.1.0 to 2.5 crore will be available to sugar factories depending upon their crushing capacity, for purchase of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides etc.

Various Crops Development scheme namely National Food Security Mission (NFSM), Macro Management of Agriculture (MMA), Integrated Scheme of Oilseed, Pulses, Oil palm and Maize (ISOPOM), and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) are being implemented in order to enhance the production and productivity of food grains and sugarcane.

Suicide by farmers in Andhra Pradesh

1691. SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU:
SHRI NANDAMURI HARIKRISHNA:
SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 20 suicide deaths have been reported in a span of forty days due to drought from Telangana and Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the help Government is extending to the State, particularly to the families of farmers who have committed suicides?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) As per information made available by the State Government, 72 farmers committed suicide from January to October, 2009 on account of agrarian reasons, comprising 43 from Telangana region and 23 from Rayalaseema region of the state. The District-wise and month-wise distribution of these suicides is given in statement (*See* below). The measures taken by the State Government to address the problem of drought affected areas includes Drought Contingency Plan of Rs.91.92 crore to provide for various alternate crop seeds of which Rs.35.00 crore has already been released by the Government towards seed subsidy. Total input subsidy amount of Rs.471.46 crore has already been released towards input subsidy to the small//marginal farmers whose crops are affected due to drought in 19 Districts of Andhra Pradesh. A Rehabilitation Package for 16 suicide prone districts of Andhra Pradesh with an approved provision of Rs. 9650.55 crore is under implementation since September 2006. Till 30th September, 2009, 94.52% of the approved provision has been released by Central/State Government and Banks.